

Animals & Men

The Journal of The Centre for Fortean Zoology



Lake Monsters-Loch Ness and Lake Dakataua;
Mystery Cats; The Hairy Hands of Dartmoor,
and much more.....

Incorporating "The Crypto Chronicle".

Issue Five £1.75

CONTENTS AND CREDITS

This issue of Animals & Men was put together by the following band of Animals and Men:

Jonathan Downes: Editor and Fall Guy.
 Jan Williams: Newsfile and Catfish.
 Alison Downes: Ornithological Administratrix.
 Lisa Peach: Art, Typing Tea and Ferrets.
 John Jacques: Sole Representation.
 Graham Inglis: Video.
 Dave Symons: Software jockey
 Nigel Smith: "SHUT UP NIGEL!"

Regional Representatives

LANCASHIRE: Stuart Leadbetter.
 SUSSEX: Sally Parsons.
 CUMBRIA AND LAKELANDS: Brian Goodwin.
 HOME COUNTIES: Phillip Kibberd
 EIRE: Tony 'Doc' Shiels.
 SPAIN: Alberto Lopez Acha.
 FRANCE: Francois de Sarre.
 MEXICO: Dr R.A Palmeros.
 SCOTLAND: Tom Anderson.
 WEST MIDLANDS: Dr Karl P.N.Shuker.

Consultants

SURREALCHEMY Tony 'Doc' Shiels.
 ZOOLOGY: Dr Karl P.N.Shuker.

Advertising Rates by arrangement.

The Centre for Fortean Zoology
 15 Holne Court
 Exwick, Exeter.
 Devon EX4 2NA

0392 424811

Contributors this issue:

Roy Kerridge. Jan Kingshott; Dr Karl P.N.Shuker.
 Stephen Shipp, Stuart Leadbetter, Eric Sorensen,
 Mike Grayson, Nick Morgan, Andy Stephens.
 Suzanne Stebbings

4 ISSUE SUBSCRIPTION RATES

UK/EIRE £7.00

EEC £8.00

EUROPE Non EEC £8.50

REST OF WORLD: £10 (surface Mail)

REST OF WORLD £14 (Air Mail)

Payment in UK Currency, Cheque drawn on UK bank, IMO, Eurocheque. Cheques payable to A&J DOWNES or THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY

CONTENTS

- p.3 Editorial
- p.4 Newsfile
- p.13 Boars and Pumas
- p.17 Witness Reliability in mystery cat sightings
- p.22 Crocodile Tears 2
- p.22 The Migo Movie: A further muddying of murky waters
- p.26 The Case of The Hairy Hands
- p.28 Near Lizard but not near enough an addendum
- p.29 Lectures
- p.30 Nervous Twitch
- p.31 Letters
- p.34 HELP
- p.35 Obituaries—Gerald Durrell and Jane Bradley
- p.37 Book Reviews
- p.38 Periodical reviews
- p.39 From Our Files "Batsquatch"
- p.40 Cartoon

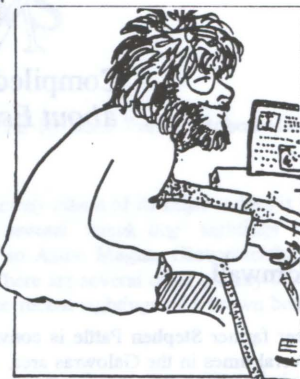
ANIMALS & MEN is published four times a year and is typeset and assembled by diverse poultry using an antiquated AMIGA A500, Pagesetter 2, D Paint v.4, and Penpal. Oh for a 486.

THE GREAT DAYS OF

Dear Readers,

With this our fifth issue, the magazine is just about a year old and we are now ready to move onto a new and more exciting plane.

We have commenced the first stages of our expansion programme. The more astute amongst you will have noticed that the cover price has risen by 25p an issue, and that the UK subscription rate is therefore a pound more a year than it was three months ago. This is because, starting with this issue we have added eight pages and are now forty pages long. We eventually intend to be about seventy pages each issue with a cover price of about two pounds fifty! The new rates will not effect existing subscribers until their present subscription has expired.



Craig Harris, the founding editor of our friendly rivals, *'The Crypto Chronicle'* has decided to call it a day, and he has donated his considerable archive to The Centre for Fortean Zoology. *'The Crypto Chronicle'* is now incorporated within this magazine, and all subscribers to *'The Crypto Chronicle'* will have the balance of their subscriptions transferred to *'Animals & Men'*. Subscribers to both magazines (and there were quite a lot of you) will have their subscription to *'The Crypto Chronicle'* added to the end of their existing subscription to this magazine, and articles submitted to *'The Crypto Chronicle'* for publication will now be published by *'Animals & Men'*. Craig himself, although mostly retired from Cryptozoology has joined our editorial team as *'Bigfoot Consultant'*.

Also new to our team are the legendary fortan and surrealist Tony 'Doc' Shiels whose self appointed designation as *'Surrealchemist in Residence'*, is one with which we concur one hundred percent, and Dr Karl P.N.Shuker, probably the UK's most eminent Cryptozoologist as *'Zoology Consultant'*. Both Karl and 'Doc' have been helping out behind the scenes for some time and it is a great pleasure to be able to welcome them officially to the team.

The A-Z of Cryptozoology has been held over for this issue, partly because of Jan Williams' ongoing problems with moving house, but mostly because of the two pages of obituaries which we felt the need to include in this issue. Assuming that noone else dies normal service will be resumed with the next issue. Jan still hasn't got a permanent address at the moment, so if anyone wants to write to her please do so care of the editorial address.

I would like to include a special 'Thank You' to Steve Browning, the antipodean D.J on Gemini Radio in Exeter who has had me on his show as his special guest on a number of occasions this year. His good humoured support and encouragement is much appreciated.

My very best wishes until next time.
Best Wishes,

ZOOLOGY ARE CONCUR NOT DONE

NEWSFILE

Compiled and Edited by Jan "Don't talk to me
about Estate Agents" Williams with bits from
The Editor.

MYSTERY CATS

Cornwall

Deer farmer Stephen Pattle is convinced his herd is being preyed upon by a big cat which has been seen several times in the Galowras area, west of Mevagissey. Mr Pattle discovered the carcasses of seven young deer on his farm near Polmassick in January. Only the heads, legs and feet remained.

Mevagissey resident Dave Brewster reported a puma-like animal on the road from Tregony Hill to Gorran. He said *'the creature's fur appeared to be bright red, probably accentuated because of the bright daylight'*. (Cornish Guardian 2.2.95)

Devon

Sue Hatcher was taking her four-year-old daughter for a pony ride down a steep-sided lane near Buckland St. Mary when her labrador dog flushed what she thought was a deer from the top of the bank 20 feet above them. The animal leapt down the near-vertical bank and bounded across the lane about 10 yards in front of them, with the dog in close pursuit.

To her astonishment, Sue realised it was a large, sleek, black cat, the same height as the labrador, but longer-bodied with a thick black tail. The cat jumped into a tree on the other side of the lane, and Sue stood underneath it for several minutes, looking up at the animal, before realising this might not be a sensible policy and retreating towards a nearby cottage. She noted that the cat's head was the size of a small football, and it had greeny-yellow eyes. The pony took little notice of the cat, and was more concerned by Ben, the labrador, who was chasing about in the undergrowth.

Sue said *'If someone had told me they'd seen a big cat before this I would have been sceptical. But it was definitely a cat - I was so close to it - and Ben was only feet from it and was a clear point of reference as to size'*.

Panther-like cats were reported a few miles away in the Bishopswood area in January of this year, and Terry Cox of Greendale, near Ilminster, watched a strange black animal through opera glasses as it stalked through fields at Herne Hill on 2nd March. Two weeks previously he had observed the same animal apparently following exactly the same route. (Chard News? 8.3.95)

Further south in the county, Tim Holmes was 'gobsmacked' by an encounter with the Beast of Salcombe Regis - centre of a major catflap in Spring 1993. He was driving near Tipton St. John on 30th January when he caught a glimpse of the animal. He got out of the car, leaned over the hedge and saw a black cat 'like a

Jaguar and at least two feet high, in the field. Large prints were found. (*Sidmouth Herald* 4.2.95)

Cambridgeshire

Trudy Bristow and David Brown saw a large cat-like animal dart across the road in front of their car in the early hours of Sunday 12th February, near the village of Haddenham. They described it as slightly smaller than a Labrador, thin and black with a very long tail. (*Ely Standard* 16.2.95)

Rutland

A 'black panther' and a lynx-like cat were reported in the villages of Ketton, Knessington, Preston and Barrowden, in and around the Vale of Catmose, in January of this year. (ITV Teletext 20.1.95)

Clwyd, Wales

Police were called to the Graig Park Country Club at Meliden, near Prestatyn, in February, following sightings of a 'panther' in the hotel grounds. Receptionist Kathryn Jones was among the witnesses. She saw the animal lying on a concrete surface about 100 yards away and described it as 'the size of a Labrador dog, jet black and with a long tail'. (*Daily Post* 1.3.95)

Tayside, Scotland

A large black cat was seen leaping across a road and into undergrowth close to the village of Colliston, near Arbroath, on January 6th. The motorist who reported it said 'It was black, much bigger than a Dalmation, but what struck me was the speed at which it moved. There was a lot of power in its rear legs and it was gone in a split second'. (Actually, she didn't say it was bigger than a Dalmation, but I'm sick of typing 'Labrador'.) Arbroath Police searched the area.

Colliston is within 10 miles of Tannadice where a big cat was reported in November 1994 and January of this year. (*The Courier and Advertiser* 7.1.95)

Grampian, Scotland

An unnamed turkey farmer in Alves, Moray, claims to have shot a 'black panther' which raided his bird pens in February.

In March Banffshire's Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Dr David Clark, photographed huge 'cat-like' pawprints in a bunker at Banff's Duff House Royal golf course. He said 'The prints really were unusually large - about 5.5-6 inches across - and definitely feline . . . It looked as if the beast leapt into the bunker after a roe deer'.

Dr Clark, a former medical lecturer at Aberdeen University, is a firm believer in mystery cats, having seen one in late 1994 on the Huntly - Kildrummy road. 'A large black cat with a long curved tail leapt out of a pine wood and ran along a dyke for 60 yards before disappearing back into the trees'. (*Aberdeen Press and*

Journal 16.3.95)

Ecologist Doug Mortimer of the Grampian Badger Survey Group stated that a roe deer carcass found in woods near Pitcaple bore 'all the classic signs of other big cat attacks'. The remains were unearthed on March 14th by Doug's dog 'Jan' (no relation!), who also found a stash of meat from the kill buried in the ground beside the skull of another deer. (Aberdeen Press and Journal 16.3.95)

Enfield, Middlesex.

A series of well publicised sightings of a mystery 'cat' during the summer of 1994 were consigned to the 'oh well' file when the animal in question proved to be a rather effeminate looking fox. Interestingly, the photograph of the animal finally printed by the newspapers looked very much like a jaguarundi, although its vulpine identity is not in question. *Enfield Advertiser* June 8th. 15th. 22nd 1995 Via COUDI.

Hillsboro, Ohio, USA.

Sherrif Tom Horst of Highland County, Ohio is coordinating the search for a mystery beast which appears to be living off small animals and road kills in the area. A partially 'eaten deer carcass has also been found. Several witnesses have seen the animal but although one witness has reported a tan and white striped 'tiger', most of the reports refer to a creature that appears to be a puma. The only question of real interest is, whether it is an escaped pet/zoo/circus animal or possibly an Eastern Cougar, a subspecies of f.concolor thought extinct, outside Florida for many years. Columbus Dispatch Nov 27 1994 via COUDI

Vermont, USA.

Another possible population of the Eastern Cougar has been reported in Vermont where cats have been seen near the town of Craftsbury in a rural, forested area in the northern part of the state only 30 miles from the Canadian border. Mr Ronald Regan (no relation) of the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife described it at "Exciting News". CRYPTOZOOLOGY NEWSLETTER Dec 1994 via COUDI.

Indonesia.

This isn't really a mystery cat, but a farmer was recently killed in southern Sumatra by one of the worlds rarest felids..a Sumatran Tiger. There are only a handful of these animals left in the world which I don't suppose made the farmer feel any better. *Teletext world news* ITV 9.3.95

..and in the end..

A final word on mystery cats for this newsfile must come from Johnny Morris whose TV show 'Animal Magic' was essential viewing for animal loving children in the sixties and seventies: "Well, what's wrong with them? They knock off sheep occasionally, but so do dogs. Its something we have to accept! I wish them the best of luck. I don't think that they have a very easy life in this country". C4 TELETEXT 14.9.95

Right on Johnny!

NEW AND REDISCOVERED SPECIES

GILBERTS POTOROO (*Potorous gilberti*)

The rodent sized Gilberts Potoroo which has been presumed extinct for 125 years has been rediscovered by accident at Two Peoples Bay, 250 miles South East of Perth, Australia. 'They are the most beautiful creatures that I have ever seen with their long noses and their incredibly soft skin' said Elizabeth Sinclair, a zoology Student who caught the first two specimens, a young male and an adult female. Soon after three more were caught. The first two specimens and two of the others were kept to start a captive breeding programme whilst the third was fitted with a radio transmitter and released back into the wild.

BBC CEEFAX TELETEXT Newsround 1.3.95, Westfalenpost 2.3.95 Die Welt 28.2.95. Picture: Engraving by John Gould courtesy Dr Karl P.N.Shuker.



SPIDERS IN THE BOG

Spiders usually turn up in the bath, but scientists from Liverpool Museum discovered a *Gnaphosa nigerrima* spider at Wybunbury Moss, an 'Ice Age' bog near Nantwich, Cheshire. The spider was previously believed extinct in Britain, though it survives in parts of continental Europe. (Daily Mail 20.1.95).

Another new species of spider is described in the December issue of The Cryptozoology newsletter. Researcher Margeret Lowman, climbing through the forest canopy in Belize has discovered a new species of spider with an amazing ability to 'shoot' its prey. The spider grasps a thread of its web, pulls it back like a bowspring, and then 'snaps' it at a passing insect.

EIGHT ARMS TO HOLD YOU..

Another unknown species of octopus has been spotted. About 15 inches long and almost completely transparent, the mollusc was sighted by the submersible 'Alvin' 1000 miles west of Guatemala at about 12,000 feet. The animal caught the scientists attention because it was attempting to mate with another, much larger octopus and they were both males. Scientist Janet Voigt speculated that '...deep sea octopi meet so rarely that males will go for anything they bump into!' CRYPTOZOOLOGY NEWSLETTER Dec 1994 via COUdi.

GENETICS

JURASSIC PARK?

Michael Chrichton's best selling fantasy would appear to have come a few paces closer to fruition. 'Cotton

like 'substance on the inside of the shell of a fossilised dinosaur egg found in a field in Henan, contained amino acids but although the scientists of Beijing University managed to partially isolate some of the DNA, even if Chrichton's cloning experiments ARE possible, (and at the moment noone seem quite sure), not enough DNA was isolated to even attempt such experiments.

A month or so earlier scientists from Brigham Young University in Utah, USA announced that they have extracted the DNA from a fragment of Cretaceous period bone found in a coal mine. 'I am confident that we have a DNA sequence that belongs to a cretaceous-period bone fragment. Based on the circumstantial evidence we believe that it is a dinosaur', said microbiologist Scott Woodward who lead the group.

Meanwhile in Montana a second group of scientists claim to have extracted genetic material from an unusually complete and well preserved skeleton of a six ton Tyrannosaurus rex discovered in 1990.

'We have done it three times' says dinosaur expert Jack Horner at Montana State and the Museum of The Rockies. 'We know that ours is 65 million years old but it is still unclear whether it belongs to the dinosaur or to some fungus or some bacteria or something else!'. Die Welt 17.3.95, Columbus Dispatch 1.2.95

THE BUTTERFLY BALL

Two species of butterfly extinct in the UK for over three quarters of a century may reappear. The Large Copper Butterfly and The Chequered Skipper became extinct with the mass destruction of much of Britains hedgerows, but still exist elsewhere in Europe.

Geneticists from 'British Nature' hope to combine the DNA from preserved museum specimens with living insects from Europe and then reintroduce the beautiful insects to their old habitats. There are three subspecies of The Large Copper in Europe and although the British subspecies *L. d. dispar* became extinct in 1848 there have been sporadic and relatively unsuccessful attempts to introduce the smaller Dutch species to a fen near Huntingdon where a colony has been maintained intermittently for some years. C4 TELETEXT GREENNEWS 27.3.95



The Large Copper
Lycena dispar



The Chequered Skipper
Carterocephalus palaeon

MYSTERY HOMINIDS & PRIMATES

DEBBIE GOES APE

Debbie Martyr has just returned from her latest expedition in search of the elusive Orang Pendek of Sumatra. Martyr, who claims to have seen the creature on three occasions describes 'an intelligent biped standing up to four feet tall, with silky, reddish coloured body hair. The face is bare with a heavy brow and almost human nose but the head and neck is gorilla like'. She says that the animals actively avoid contact with humans and feed off ginger plants, termites, fruit, freshwater crabs and nesting birds and have even stolen the 'lunches' of researchers. Ms Martyr however is of the opinion that the creatures are intelligent apes rather than relict hominids. 'Bild' March 7.95, BBC Wildlife 1995.

BIG FOOTPRINTS

A massive operation involving Trekkers, Wildlife experts, jungle tribes, policemen and even units of the Malaysian Army has been mobilised to search for an 8 foot tall hominid named 'bigfoot' (sounds familiar?) in the dense jungle surrounding Tanjung Pia in Johore province. Footprints have been found, but as we went to press it appeared that 'Operasi Kaki Besar' (Malay for...you guessed it, 'Operation Bigfoot'), was unsuccessful in obtaining more concrete evidence in favour of these mystery beings which the Johore tribesmen claim have been sent into Malaysia by unspecified 'evil forces'. *Rocky Mountain News Jan 13 1995 via COUDI, Columbus Dispatch 22.1.95 via COUDI*

WAITING FOR THE MAN

The intelligent and exciting research carried out by Chinese researchers into the Yeren or Chinese Wildman has been perverted a little recently when a number of newspapers worldwide, excitedly claimed to be printing a photograph of 'Son of Wildman' the putative offspring of a human girl in a remote Chinese village and one of these elusive mystery hominids. The photograph, which we make no apologies for reproducing here, without copyright clearance is nothing more than a picture of an oriental man in his late teens or mid twenties suffering from Microcephaly, and has no real relevance whatsoever to the main body of mystery hominid research. We are printing it purely to close this rather unwholesome sub-chapter of the history of cryptozoology and also as a heartfelt rebuke to journalists, editors and even scientists who should know better for using a photograph of a severely impaired human being in a crass attempt to sell newspapers.



The 'real' research in China continues apace with several new sightings, a new body dedicated to the mystery, 'The Committee for the Search of rare and Strange Creatures', (formed by a group of scientists from the Chinese Academy of Science), and even a martyr to the cause:

Wang Guan Xiang, a 40 year old forestry worker saw a Yeren when he was ten years old: "I was walking home from school at three P.M when I saw him just ahead-he looked like a big, tall nan but was covered in long red hair..I told my mother but she worried that I was telling lies and asked my Uncle to look at the spot. He found a footprint next to the rock where I had seen the wildman standing".

The martyr is another Forest ranger, Yuan Yu Hao, who has also seen the creature on a number of occasions and has become so obsessed with capturing a specimen that his employers recently docked him two months wages for neglecting his job in favour of wild man research. *Brisbane Sunday Telegraph 15.1.95 Brisbane Sunday Mail 8.1.95 via COUDI and UK Daily Mail December 1994.*

WILD CHILD

A 'wild child' found two years ago in rural Romania and placed in a home in Bucharest remains 'feral' and continues to suckle the bitch which succoured him, a news agency has repoofed. The child, named Sorin, who is about nine years old speaks no human words but communicates with the dog (with whom he still shares his food) by making barking sounds. *BRISBANE COURIER MAIL 24.7.94 Via COUDI*

RHESUS NEGATIVE

Three Rhesus Macaques escaped from Woburn Safari Park, Bedfordshire, on 17th March. The monkeys remained within the park boundaries for several days, then moved out into the surrounding countryside. By the weekend of the 25th they had crossed the M1 motorway, and were heading for more densely populated areas. At dawn on Sunday one of the macaques was shot in a tree at Westoning, and a second, which had been rummaging through gardens and over rooftops in the town of Flitwick, was shot on Monday morning. The third was enticed into a garage by a householder acting on the advice of Safari Park staff and was recaptured safely.

Chris Webster, Managing Director of Woburn Safari Park, said he and the rest of the staff were concerned and upset by the deaths, but there was no alternative. They had tried to recapture the monkeys, and had considered using tranquillizer darts, but this had not been practical. Macaques are listed under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act, and once they moved into built-up areas there was a possible risk to the public. Police and RSPCA officials agreed shooting was the only viable option.

DUTCH BABOONS CLIMB A TREE...

Two hundred Baboons in Emmen Zoo in Holland all climbed up the same tree for no apparent reason. Last summer one animal started to scream and they all climbed the tree and refused to come down. *BBC TELETEXT 20.7.94*

MORE BABOONS...

Foreign seamen smuggling rare species into the UK pose a real problem say customs officials in Plymouth, who cited the recent case of a Maltese seaman who smuggled in a West African Olive Baboon and offered it for sale in the city. *ITV WESTCOUNTRY NEWS TELETEXT 27.1.95*

THE BEAST OF BALA

What seemed for five minutes like it was going to be the most exciting crypto news story for many moons fizzled out again just as we were going to press. 7.30 PM Wednesday April 5th, a Policeman driving on the A494 between Bala and Llanuwchllyn saw an animal chasing 30-40 sheep. The sheep were terrified and climbing on top of each other. The officer threw a stone and a stick at the animal which ran away. The Policeman was concerned that the sheep would be injured and went and told the owner, and the policeman and the farmer, armed with a shotgun followed the animal into a field, saw it running towards the flock of sheep, and shot it. The animal was described as about 4ft long, black and white with 'a badgers head' and the tail of a monkey.

It turned out to be a Ruffed Lemur, an endangered species, and a creature that normally eats nothing larger than sweet fruit and nesting birds. As we went to press its origin was uncertain but it had been announced that it had escaped locally. *BBC TELETEXT and various radio reports 6.4.95*

THE WIZARDS OF OZ

A lost tribe of pygmy Aborigines could be living in the north Queensland jungle claims Australian amateur historian Frank 'Salty' O'Rourke. When he was a boy he had been told stories about these mysterious little

men: 'Old fellows used to say watch out when you go into the forest for those pygmies..they reckon they were in there and so small and quiet that they would disappear when they saw the white man coming'. Mr O'Rourke has gathered an impressive body of evidence to support his claims and he even claims that these people were photographed in the 1880's. There have only, however, been two reports of 'lost' aboriginal tribes being 'discovered' in the last thirty years, the most recent being in 1984 when nine Pintubi nomads arrived at the Papunya outstation west of Alice Springs. **BRISBANE COURIER MAIL 17.10.94 via COUDI**

FRESHWATER AND MARINE MYSTERIES

JAWS!

A Great White Shark is suspected in the fatal attack on diver James Robinson, (42) near San Miguel Island 40 miles off the coast of Santa Barbara, California. The states last shark fatalities were off Malibu in 1989. **USA TODAY 12.12.95 Via COUDI**

TURNING TURTLE

A record number of sea turtles were washed up dead on the Texas coast last year according to experts who blame off-shore dredging operations. **TELETEXT ITV 9.3.95**

THE 'NESSIE' WITH THE GOLDEN HAIR

A large aquatic creature described as 'having a head as large as a bull and a dragon like body covered in flowing golden blonde hair', has been reported from Tianchi Lake on the mountainous border between China and North Korea. The sightings have, apparently continued intermittently for the last century and photographs and even video footage has been taken. After the saga of Lake Dakataua the editor is far less sceptical than he used to be about such things and awaits more news with interest. **WATERBURY REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN 10.9.94 via COUDI**

JAPANESE MEGAMOUTH

The seventh Megamouth shark (*Megachasma pelagios*) has been washed up in Hakata Bay, Kyushu, Japan. This specimen, a female measures 4.8m and weighs 790 kg. The specimen is in a deep freeze at the Marine Museum, in Fukuoka. The species was first seen in 1976 when a dead specimen was hauled up in Hawaii, and it wasn't scientifically described for another seven years. Only two living specimens have ever been seen. **BBC WILDLIFE Feb 1995 and Dr Karl Shuker.**

PIRANHAS IN THE HOLY LAND.

Yaakov Ezri, an Israeli fisherman, caught three mysterious fish in the sea of Galilee. A local 'expert' identified them as Piranhas. These voracious South American fish are kept worldwide as popular, if slightly macabre pets and have been accidentally (or possibly even maliciously) introduced into parts of Europe bordering on The Mediterranean. The three fish were bought for more than \$100 dollars each by souvenir hunters in search of a novelty. They were, presumably, not too pleased when the fish turned out to be the equally exotic, and closely related (but not so media friendly) Pacu..a harmless vegetarian. Although local experts speculated that the fish

would be unlikely to survive the temperature drop in the winter one wonders what the effect on the Galilean ecosystem would be if these unusual fish became established there? *COLUMBUS DISPATCH 18.12.94, DETROIT NEWS 18.11.94 both Via COUDI*

OTHER NEWS

DUMBO STRIKES BACK

Walt Disney Inc has taken extreme measures to stop fake copies of its toys being sold in India. It has hired two elephants to crush 20, 000 fake Mickey Mouse toys in Dehli as a symbolic warning. *NEWSROUND BBC CEEFAX 23.3.95*

HOLY HERMAPHRODITE GOATS!

A Palestinian shepherd is making a considerable income from the milk from his goat! Israelis and Arabs are queuing up to drink the milk because they believe it is a cure for impotence. The goat is male and has sired more than fifty kids, but he has one teat which gives two glasses of milk a day. Shepherd, Mufid Abdul Chafer is charging twenty one ponds per glass! *WEIRD BUT TRUE ITV TELETEXT 11.2.95*

FUNKY DUNG

Two totally trivial news items which caught your editor's attention for no apparent reason. Rochester City Council recently announced that each week one and a half tonnes of dog excrement were deposited on the streets of their fair city. Sounds Divine! Maybe we should all go to Boysie Idaho. London artist Sally Matthews used eight buckets of cow dung spread on a cow shaped steel and wire frame for her latest life sized work in an exhibition entitled 'With Animals'. *AUSTRALIAN COURIER MAIL 25.7.94 via COUDI*

URBAN JUNGLE

Complaints from neighbours prompted environment officials to investigate Vincent Pace's house in Syracuse, New York. The small house was crammed with 74 exotic animals and birds. An African lion, Bengal tiger, black bear, wallaby, and monkeys were roaming free in the property. Pace has been charged with unlawful possession of protected wildlife. *(Mail on Sunday 15.1.95)*

FLAMING PETS

'Our policy is humans first, hamsters second' said fire officer Tony Reid after two fire engines loaded with firefighters rushed to a blazing house in Far Cotton, Northamptonshire to rescue a three-month-old hamster. Dusky the hamster was asleep at the time, but they poked him to see if he was all right, and he wasn't even warm. Snakes apparently come third on the list in Northants. Firefighters rescued four large pythons - one 13 feet long from David Vine's burning bedroom in Romany Road, Northampton. Two tarantulas and a scorpion also survived the blaze. Mr Vine's mother said her son had kept 'weird animals' for several years. *(Northampton Chronicle 22.3.95)*

Newsfile Correspondents: Alan Beattie, Dionne Jones, Alan Pringle, Steven Shipp, Karl Shuker, Tom Anderson, COUDI., Wolfgang Schmidt

Boars and Pumas

by
Roy Kerridge

Most English people, however ardently they may speak of conservation, feel a secret relief that dangerous wild animals in this country have been wiped out a long time ago. Even amidst the wildest Northern Hills, (it is believed we may walk freely without having to fear wild boars, bears and wolves. Our non conservationist ancestors have, with bow and arrow, granted us this freedom. Now, for the first time in centuries these certainties are beginning to fade. Rumours of wild beasts returning mysteriously to moorland and mountain are causing many a head to turn nervously whenever the bracken rustles.

When a wild boar, nicknamed 'Bonnie' by the local press, escaped from a farm into the hills of County Durham, headlines proclaimed the return of Boar Hunting to Britain. Garbled reports in southern papers suggested that police marksmen were closing in on a giant sheep ravaging wild boar. Sergeant Eddie Bell, of Consett Police Station, had been named in such a report, and I took him to be the leader of the hunting party. So up to County Durham I went, to meet Sergeant Bell in his home town of Stanley, where he lives with his wife Patricia, not far from the Blue Boar Inn.

The Bells, Eddie and Patricia, were about to move house when I arrived, so I sat among packing cases, drinking tea and listening to fascinating tales of wild beasts at large. Eddie proved to be a big, genial man, round faced yet rugged. Although the boar story proved not as exciting as I had hoped, Eddie Bell's account of Pumas and other big cats more than made up for this. Police reports of big game on the loose had been sent to him from every part of Britain, and he kept them in a battered file stained by banana sandwiches from his 'bait box'. (Geordie for lunch box). Meanwhile Eddie's expertise on animal matters has spared the Durham police from mounting a costly boar hunt.

The farmer who claimed that he had seen the boar attacking his sheep based his description of the animal on a TV Film he had seen of warthogs in Africa. He described a warthog and when I told him what a female wild boar looks like, he didn't know what to say. For a start Bonnie weighs less than the sheep she is supposed to have savaged, and her teeth are not capable of tearing flesh, as a male boar's tusks might do. In Germany where wild boar farming is commonplace, female boars feed in the same fields as sheep. Dogs, probably lurchers were the real culprits. A police hunt for a harmless animal like Bonnie would have been a real waste of money. Mr Pinder, the farmer who lost her, simply went along with a pheasant shooting party, in the vain hope that Bonnie would be flushed out of hiding by the guns'.

(It seemed odd to reflect that Bonnie was not only a 'female boar' but a 'tame wild boar'. However, I suppose that many wild ducks are really drakes, and that wild ducks in parks are tame).

Vague plans for capturing Bonnie were still under discussion (drugged apples were one idea - a bit like Snow White), but as she did little harm, I felt that she might as well remain in the woods as a tourist attraction. More alarming were Eddie's files on escaped big cats. Call me squeamish but I have a horror of wild leopards. Records seem to prove without a doubt that black panthers (as black leopards are known), lurk in English woods. Writer Auberon Waugh has seen one running across a cricket field in Somerset, to name only one witness.

Fortunately for the friendly people of County Durham, Eddie believes that most 'big cat sightings' locally are of pumas. A puma is slightly smaller than the average leopard, and is russet brown in colour, with a white and black muzzle, large black rimmed ears, a white throat and a long, thick black tipped but not tufted tail. Its natural range covers the whole american continent from Alaska to Patagonia. Although supposedly extinct in the Eastern states of the U.S.A., individuals appear enigmatically every ten years or so. Pumas only attack humans if trapped, wounded or cornered, and usually prefer rabbits or deer to farm stock. They are easily tamed and the introduction and sudden suppression of the puma as a pet shop animal has caused the cat to become part of Britain's wildlife.

I remember seeing an enchanting puma cub in a Weymouth pet shop at the height of the 'Surrey Puma' scare. Young pumas have spots which fade on adulthood.

Tough, wealthy young builders and men of action, in the early 'seventies, began to buy big cats as pets, a trend which alarmed the government. The Dangerous Animal Act of 1976 was an attempt to control matters by introducing licenses, 'vetting' owners, laying down standards of cage construction and so on. Many families appear to have responded by driving the family puma, leopard or jaguar to a lonely spot and turning it loose. I was incredulous at such folly, but Eddie assured me that it happened.

'Supposing a man grew fond of his puma, and couldn't afford to comply with the new regulations. He may have felt it was better to turn it loose than to have it put to sleep', he complained, with something of an animal lovers pity in his voice.

Eddie's file showed that in the early 'eighties pumas in County Durham were reported in the populous semi-industrialised eastern part of the county, near the sea. Now, most reports come, far more infrequently from the wild and mountainous west. It seemed as if released pumas had gradually made their way further and further from the scene of their release from captivity into wilderness country. At first they might have scavenged for food, but now they had learned to hunt rabbits and roe (a small deer), and could survive independantly of man.

'There's so many rabbits lying squashed on the roads that a puma could live on them easily without hunting at all' Eddie told me. *'I could live on them, if I had to.'*

I estimate that in the hills west of here eleven to fourteen pumas are living wild within an area of six hundred square miles. Roe Deer are increasing at a great rate, and in the same area there may be twenty thousand deer! These deer are culled frequently. A deer census has been held but I think that it only shows a third of the true numbers. When a helicopter hovered just over a wood, more deer ran out into the fields than any census taker would have believed possible. Roe Deer like broken farmland.

Just across the border in Northumberland, in Kielder forest, there are supposed to be two thousand roe deer, but I believe thatthere are really six thousand there. Each year there is an .attempted cull of eighty percent of the deer. In other words, if you have four thousand deer in your wood, you must shoot three hundred and twenty a year to keep the numbers stable, and stop them from destroying their own neighbourhood.

For many years now, natural predators of deer have been wiped out. Now the puma is taking over the role. A large puma could live very well on seventy to ninety deer a year. experiments with captive pumas in large enclosures show that zoo bred animals can learn to hunt almost overnight. It seems that as deer are the natural prey of a puma, wild pumas will stick to what they know and ignore sheep'.

I wondered if there had been many cases of sheep killed by pumas

'Well, round here, a sheep was killed by a big cat at Bowburn, to judge by the evidence. West of Stanley, in the hills, a sheep could vanish and the farmer wouldn't know that it was gone. Of course, every big cat reported is not a puma. Larger cats would certainly kill sheep. I estimate that there must be about two hundred wild pumas nationwide'.

According to his files there are other species loose as well..

'I have had reports of lions and even a cheetah, but that's a bit far fetched. Apart from pumas there are Indian Jungle cats, leopards, leopard cats, lynxes and a Bengal Tiger'...

'A What??' I gasped..

'Yes, in Sutherland, north east Scotland there is a solitary Bengal Tiger living wild. People who own private zoos or keep exotic pets, very seldom report it if an animal escapes. They keep quiet in case of trouble. You say you're staying at the Neville's Cross Hotel, Durham City? There was an African Crested Porcupine living wild there for ages. It survived being knocked down by a car, and was eventually captured by a man from the Ministry of Agriculture.

On another occasion a well known zoo decided to send two male timber wolves to an exhibition at the museum in Newcastle. The wolves travelled up in a van which was parked overnight at the Town Moor. In the morning when the driver got there, he found the back of the van open and the wolves gone! No one has seen them since!

Baboons escaped from the Lambton Wildlife Park, and began throwing stones at cars on the motorway. Those animals were caught but of the two Nilghai (a large Indian Antelope) that escaped from Flamingoland, Yorkshire, one was shot and one may still be free'.

Of the wild cats on Eddie Bell's list, the Indian jungle cat and the leopard cat pose no threat to human life. They are not much larger than a domestic cat. Jungle cats are brown, with tufted ears and short tails and have been reported from the Welsh Borders. One was found dead near Ludlow in Shropshire.

(EDITORS NOTE: Another specimen was killed by a car in Hayling Island, Hampshire. The stuffed remains of the Shropshire animal are now the property of 'Animals and Men' contributor Dr Karl P.N.Shuker).

Leopard cats also from India, are small and unalarming. These attractive little animals have been shot in Scotland.

(EDITORS NOTE: The Bengal Leopard Cat (*Felis bengalensis*) is widely distributed across Asia where it is often kept as a house pet and has hybridised with domestic 'moggies', as well as being hunted for food in Southern China. A new breed of domestic cat currently in vogue amongst the cognoscenti also has some *F. bengalensis* in its bloodline. Feral specimens of this charming creature have been shot in Cheshire, on Dartmoor and on the Isle of Wight, as well as in Scotland).

Our native Scottish wildcat once lived across Britain.

Pockets of native wildcattery may have remained in Wales and on Exmoor. It seems that Scottish Wildcats, feral (gone wild) domestic cats, jungle cats and leopard cats may all be breeding with each other in the wild.

Odd looking hybrid cats are constantly being reported. Many are black, and I put forward the idea that Mother Nature has decided to settle on black as a catch all colour for hybrid cats of various multi coloured backgrounds.

'Perhaps escaped BIG cats, like pumas and leopards are breeding' I suggested. So many reports of big cats describe black animals, and black panthers are rare in captivity.

'No, I think that nearly all reports are of Pumas' Eddie replied. There is no known case of a melanistic (black mutation), puma.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Not quite true-but statistically close enough).

Bodger, my Bull Mastiff is a brown puma colour. If you see him close by in a field by moonlight he looks black. At thirty yards he's invisible. I've watched him under car headlights and unless he's directly in front of the car, he STILL looks black. Even under street lighting he looks dark, so I think that many so called 'black panthers' are really pumas which are not so dangerous'.

As Eddie spoke his own cat Samantha, leaped onto a packing case and flattened her ears wildcat fashion.

'She's a cross between a domestic cat and a Scottish Wildcat', Eddie said calmly. 'Near here, Consett and Stanley there have been reports of big cats that appear to be lynxes. That's puzzling as Lynxes are seldom kept in captivity'.

A lynx is a jungle cat writ large, though not as large as a puma, it seldom attacks man and a full grown sheep would probably be too much for it. Nobody seems quite sure whether Lynxes survived in Britain into historic times. References in old books to 'the catamount' might refer to the Lynx or to the scottish wildcat. (In America the Puma is often called 'The Catamount' or 'Mountain Lion').

Eddie and I agreed that Lynxes might have survived in Britain unnoticed until now. William Cobbett, author of 'Rural Rides' (1830) saw a strange wild animal as a boy in England that in adulthood he recognised at a lynx. He travelled to North America where lynxes were common, and saw the same species of animal there.

At long last, Eddie handed me his precious file, and I had a look for myself. The file opened in 1986, the year of 'cat fever' in Britain, with a Mr Dawkins of Edinburgh's report about seeing a black panther late at night near the city.

The second item was altogether more amusing.

'24th September 1986. Woman from Bowburn reported hearing an animal roaring at rear of a hedge next to a field. She said it sounded just like a tiger roaring. It was a field full of cows. Believed to be the sound of a cow mooing'.

'Until I started this file I thought that people could at least tell a cat from a dog', Eddie remarked. 'Now I doubt if people can tell an elephant from a frog'.

Three reports of big cats in County Durham itself seemed most convincing. At Melsonby a puma with three cubs was seen by a man described as a 'proper countryman'. who knew all about animals. Near Beamish, a lynx had been seen by a professor of biology. On August 25th 1992 a biology teacher

and her daughter saw a puma hunting rabbits along the edge of a railway line and watched it for quite a time.

Now utterly convinced of the puma's future place in books of British wildlife, I asked Sergeant Bell if he had ever seen one in the wild. To my surprise, he had not, but he had made a plaster cast of a fresh pug mark in the clay at nearby Wingate. (All readers of books on big game hunting will know that a big cat's footprint is called a pugmark). The print had been identified as that of a puma. A bulldozer had destroyed most of the prints by the time he had arrived.

My interview was over, but as an extra treat Sergeant Bell took me into a back room where he kept a delightful zoo of little disneyish animals-chipmunks, opossums, flying squirrels and bright eyed spiny mice from Arabia. Before leaving County Durham I called at Stanley Taxis and asked Michael, a young driver to give me a tour of puma country. A gifted conversationalist, Michael told me of roe deer he had seen running across the fields, but he knew nothing of pumas. We drove through market towns, along scenic forest roads and into the river Wear at the ford near Stanhope.)

What a country! All the best qualities of the Cotswolds and of the Highlands combine to make County Durham a holidaymakers dream. But I was disappointed in one thing. We drove all the way through Hamsterley Forest and didn't see so much as a hamster. Perhaps I'll spot a puma next time!

Witness Reliability in Mystery Cat Sightings: A Cautionary Tale.

by J.B.Kingshott BSc (Hons) M.A ARSM

The worldwide mystery cat phenomenon has a common denominator present in every single sighting, and that denominator is the obvious presence of one or more witnesses to that sighting. Much of the evidence for the presence of mystery cats comes from the written or oral evidence presented by the witness, based upon their cognitive recollections of the incident itself. In considering this fact we must be aware of the dangers of accepting witness testimony as indisputable fact without real evidence. Just because a witness says that a particular fact was true does not mean that it actually was. Am I saying that all witnesses to mystery cats are hoaxers? Of course not. A hoax can be defined as a conscious decision to deceive for humorous or mischievous purposes. ⁽¹⁾ While hoaxers do permeate the field of mystery cat studies, as they do in any field of unexplained phenomena, the majority of reports come from genuine people who have actually seen an unexpected and unexplained animal, and often need much cajoling to relay the facts for fear of ridicule from peers. Why then, should we be sceptical of their testimony? The following discussion should explain this more fully. I am not dismissing reports of mystery cats, as it is a fact that they do exist and are physically very real, but I am introducing the concept of caution to the reader.

Is there such an entity as 'the reliable witness'? If you were to ask one hundred people to list variable professions that they believe to be reliable witnesses, included near the top of that list would be the police

officer. Should we therefore consider police officers to be unshakable in their views of mystery cat incidents? As a Police officer myself, I have taken the opportunity of talking to colleagues about their own unreported sightings of large felines. When working the night shift I have often had the opportunity of being double crewed in a panda car. In this situation topics of conversation are wide and varied and invariably turns to stories of the unexplained. Police officers are out and about at all sorts of strange hours and a conversation with any of them will bring forward a torrent of stories about strange goings on that have been witnessed. An example would be where former PC's Cliff Waycott and Roger Willey encountered the famous 'flying cross' UFO in Hatherleigh, Devon, in October 1967⁽²⁾. Whether you actually believe in UFOs or not is irrelevant, as the point is that it was a strange occurrence, it did actually happen, and the principal witnesses were police officers.

Of the ten members of my shift four people (not including myself) had seen what can only be described as mystery cats, some on numerous occasions. As police officers we are often required to be moved to various stations around Devon and Cornwall. Consequently in more rural stations, the opportunity arises for night patrolling in out of the way places. It is here that such sightings seem to occur. These sightings, although often amongst the most interesting go largely unreported for fear of the unrelenting ridicule expected from colleagues. What sort of sightings am I talking about?

Perhaps the best sighting came from my tutor constable, whose name I will withhold for the reasons outlined above. His sighting occurred on an unclassified section of road near the village of Kenn just outside Exeter. He was driving his police car down the road when he noticed something moving in the outer limit of his headlights. Thinking it was a dog he slowed the car down and continued to approach the animal. As he got closer, he realised that it was not moving in a 'dog like' manner, but was loping along like a cat. It continued to move along the edge of the road in front of the car until it was about twenty feet away. By this time it was well within the illuminated area provided by the headlights. He watched as the creature turned its head towards him and looked at the car, which by now had stopped. He described the creature as follows:-

'It was definitely a big cat with a shaggy coat that was dark brown or black in colour with lighter patches underneath. It had small ears and the eyes shone green in the headlights. It was about five feet long and had an enormous curving tail, the end of which kept twitching. The head seemed quite small for the body and the legs were stocky with large feet. It watched me for about ten seconds and then casually walked up into the hedge'⁽³⁾

Another sighting was made by a police officer from Exeter known as Jock. This sighting which occurred near the village of Whimble is remarkable principally due to the close proximity of the witness to the cat and the behaviour of the cat itself. I have not interviewed Jock myself, but my Dad, at the time a Sergeant at Heavitree Road, did.

'I was driving along the road when I saw a bloody great cat by the side of the road. It wasn't the least bit surprised at the noise from the car or the light from the headlights. It was brown in colour, of stocky build and had a comparatively small head, a long tail and big feet. It wasn't frightened and started to walk towards the car. I killed the engine and just sat there. It came across the front of the car and started to walk down the offside. I was in a Ford Escort and the head was visible above the bonnet. It walked up to the drivers window and sniffed at it. It had black patches around its mouth and the colour of its head seemed to be a lighter brown than the body colour. It looked straight at me and then walked off behind the car. When I had recovered from the shock I turned around and it had gone'⁽⁴⁾.

These are just a couple of the many sightings by police officers that I am collating. Other sightings have been made from all over Devon, and I am just scratching the surface because being stationed in one particular place,

I do not get the opportunity to meet many officers from the more rural regions. However unreported police sightings are still drifting to me, the latest being reported to my Dad (now an Inspector in Camborne), on the 25th October 1994.

As to analysing such sightings, I have not really covered much ground, due to the small number of sightings I have collected as yet. From this small number I find that approximately 75% of the sightings refer to black cats and that the remaining 25% refer to brown cats. This agrees favourably with the reported frequency of such cats in North Devon collated from a much larger survey by Trevor Beer⁽⁵⁾. However such a distinction based on so small a number is hardly methodologically sound! It is the quality of the sightings that interest me rather than the quantity. Many people see fleeting glimpses of animals running across fields and assume them to be big cats, but police officers are usually described as 'reliable observers', and the comparatively higher incidence of close range sightings is interesting.

As to the eternal question of what they are, it is hard to say in most cases. Some, such as the sighting by Jock described above, point quite strongly to the ubiquitous puma, but what of the others? When reading through the descriptions of the cats as provided by eye witnesses, a researcher can just about reach a conclusion as to the animals possible identity, when a physical characteristic that the witness insists upon throws your opinion out the window. Does this mean that the United Kingdom is populated by several unknown species of bizarre cats? I would suggest that it does not and discrepancies arise due partly to the nature of witness observation as a phenomenon and partly due to misidentification of accepted though alien species.

In police work, the nature of witness sightings has important connotations in witness trials. Several people can see exactly the same incident and the people involved. Each witness will state categorically that what they describe is what they have seen, but they can't all be right. Similarly, if only one witness is present that description may not necessarily be correct with regard to the actual incident. These unconscious discrepancies, though not purposefully designed to deceive, can have a bearing on the reliability of that witness in a criminal trial, where all a defence barrister has to do is to introduce an element of reasonable doubt. This is an important point to bear in mind when considering mystery cat sightings. Add to the above the usual emotional reaction of shock, fear or excitement upon seeing a misplaced creature, often on a dark night, sometimes at quite a distance, sometimes for a brief moment and you have considerable room for error. Also, the replaying of the incident over and over again in the witnesses mind will gradually alter the facts from what was seen to what was believed or perceived to have been seen. Therefore, the witness may believe absolutely in what he is describing to you, but this does not automatically mean that it is an accurate rendition of what he actually saw. If a criminal case depended on such observational conditions, a defence barrister would shoot the witness down in flames.

Having said this, however, it does not mean that all reports are wildly inaccurate. Many may be perfectly valid and the descriptions given may be incredibly accurate. It is important to bear these points in mind when considering the validity of witness evidence. It is also important for researchers not to accept those sightings that confirm to known animals whilst dismissing those that don't as witness error. With this in mind are police officers more reliable as witnesses than other people?

Police Officers witness events just like everyone else and are subject to the same psychological discrepancies when considering witness testimony. However, we, (police officers) tend to have more experience and a degree of training in observational techniques, so are often described as 'reliable witnesses'. This is generally true, but the mind of a police officer is designed the same as anyone elses (contrary to popular belief!), so it is open to the same perceptual difficulties outlined above. An example would be the insistence by a certain Bodmin Police Officer, who has declared himself a 'big cat expert', that the big cats he regularly sees on Bodmin Moor

are Pumas, when all the evidence, including the black colouration of the cats and expert testimony, points to the fact that they are not pumas at all. This illustrates another important point. That of witness prejudice. i.e. You see what you want to.

If a person were to go out looking for a black panther on Exmoor, and see a dark coloured animal run onto woodland, he will be more open to the interpretation of a panther sighting than a more commonplace explanation. In other words he could have convinced himself that what he saw was a panther, almost before he saw it. If he were with a similar minded friend, they would effectively convince each other that they had seen a panther. Dr Karl Shuker identifies this problem in his excellent book *'Mystery Cats of the World'*:

'Such excitement and interest (not to mention apprehension), (OCCUR,) that after a time any animal seen is automatically identified at the mystery one concerned'⁽⁶⁾.

This is an automatic human reaction and some researchers suggest that most big cat sightings are simply misidentifications of feral cats⁽⁷⁾, either consciously as in the infamous Sun photographs⁽⁸⁾, or unconsciously as in the Surrey Puma sightings of the mid 1960's⁽⁹⁾. When considering some, but by no means all, amateur big cat investigators, it seems evident that little objective researching is undertaken and they are clearly open to such interpretations. This phenomenon can also be used to consider the animal kills commonly attributed to various 'Beasts'. As soon as a sheep or a foal is killed everyone starts shouting 'its the Beast of Exmoor/Dartmoor/Bodmin/Tedburn etc!'. How many carcasses are actually scientifically examined and proved, not suspected, but proved beyond reasonable doubt that the kill is attributable to a big cat, and not a more commonplace native predator.

Allied to this is the power of suggestion when attempting to identify alleged mystery cats. How often have you heard a witness state categorically, 'It was a Puma, a Black Puma'? Very few of these witnesses have any qualifications or experience in zoological identification, so could not tell a puma from a jungle cat, and many probably couldn't tell a puma from a dog. The identification of a 'black puma' is a common one, and appears to stem from media misrepresentations during witness questioning, resulting in a misinformed opinion of identity. This is seen over and over again when the media are involved, and in one case the television crew told the witness to say that it was a cat when she thought it was a dog. However, the black puma has become the standard explanation for mystery black cat sightings, although as Dr Shuker states:

'Though variable in colour, only a single black puma has ever been officially documented. Hence it is highly unlikely that melanistic pumas could be the large black cats sighted in Britain'⁽¹⁰⁾.

Having said this, so called 'experts' from local zoos and wildlife parks continue to categorically affirm that the large melanistic cat seen on Bodmin Moor last year was a 'female black puma'⁽¹¹⁾.

This illustrates the problem when examining the method used by the researcher to elicit the required information during the interview stage. There are many differing techniques used in interviewing suspects and witnesses but the most useful for mystery cat sightings would be successive free recalls of the incident without questioning. Because there is no questioning the interviewer cannot colour the recall by suggestively implanting false information. Once this has been achieved, indirect questions such as 'What can you tell me about its head?' are used instead of the more direct 'Did it have big ears?'. This enables the witness to give a detailed description of what he saw without suggestive interruptions from the interviewer. By using the Cognitive Method of interviewing, the witness is allowed several recall stages enabling successively more detailed recollections of the event. Therefore a truer representation of the sequence of events in question will be presented.

be presented.

In conclusion, the presentation of witness evidence, be it by police officers or other people, should be considered cautiously when attempting to identify the presence of large cats in rural Britain. By no means dismiss as fanciful all reports of large cats, as there are many reliable reports each year, but beware of the pitfalls of taking witness testimony as fact without supporting evidence of whatever kind.

Copyright by J.B.Kingshott BSc (Hons) M.A ARSM Exeter, November 1994.

The opinions expressed in this article do not reflect any official police viewpoint and are simply the views and opinions of Jan Kingshott based on experience and research.

REFERENCES.

1. The Concise Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford University Press, 1976, p.510.
2. CHAPMAN, R: Unidentified Flying Objects, Mayflower Paperbacks, 1970, pp. 13-22.
3. Interviews with author, March 1994.
4. Interviews with Brian Kingshott, October 1992.
5. BEER, T: The Beast of Exmoor: Fact or Legend?, Countryside Productions, 1986 (?), p.13.
6. SHUKER, Dr K.P.N: Mystery Cats of the World: From Blue Tigers to Exmoor Beasts, Robert Hale pub., 1st Ed, 1989, p. 53.
7. BRIERLEY, N: They Stalk By Night: The Big Cats of Exmoor and the South West, Yeo Valley Productions, 1989.
8. The Sun newspaper, story and photographs by Robert Kellaway and Colin Shepherd respectively, Saturday 30th October 1993 pp. 1-2.
9. BURTON, M: Animals, vol 9, December 1966, pp.458-461.
10. SHUKER, Dr K.P.N: op.cit., 0.56.
11. From BBC South West TV Programme 'The Search for the Beast' first broadcast in November 1993 on BBC2.

Public Domain Software for the Amiga Computer.

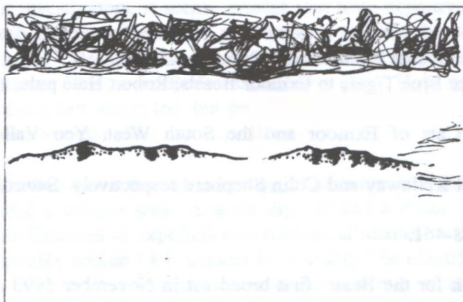
Thousands of titles available at less than £1.00 a disk including Post and Packing. Utilities, slideshows, word processing, educational, comms, demos and more than 1000 games! Over 5000 disks contain everything you could ever need for your Amiga. Send a blank disk and a stamp for a free copy of my list which includes free games and utilities.

B.Goodwin, 6 Peter St, Whitehaven, Cumbria, CA28 7QB

CROCODILE TEARS II

Just when you thought it was safe to go back into Lake Dakataua.....
we finally get a copy of the video and everything we wrote in the last
three issues goes out of the proverbial window!

The recent revelations that a Japanese TV crew had managed to film what is apparently a large, long and apparently unknown species of animal in Lake Dakataua on the island of New Britain in the Bismark Archipelago, off the coast of New Guinea has been rocking the cryptozoological world to its shaky foundations. We first printed the news item in issue two and since then each issue has revealed progressively more about what is undoubtedly the most exciting piece of cryptozoological news for many years, if not ever. One morning we received a video cassette containing the original Japanese TV programme from our sole Japanese subscriber, Tokuharu Takabayashi. We transferred it over from NTSC to PAL at Exeter University, and when, after so many months of anticipation we finally saw the video we were astounded.



Your editor is a sceptic. He has usually found that the best way to survive within the jungle of truths, half truths, rumours and lies that makes up so much of cryptozoology, is not to believe in anything until he has to, and he was quite expecting, especially in view of what we wrote in issue four to see a video consisting of an unimpressive and amorphous blob in the middle distance, and he was mildly looking forward to writing a sarcastic 'put down' to that effect. What we actually saw was something far more exciting

For copyright reasons we cannot print pictures direct from the film but we are hoping to get permission to include such pictures in a future issue. In the meantime you will have to make do with an artistic impression of a still from the video from our resident artist Lisa Peach. For a full analysis of the video we sent it (with our hearts full of trepidation because we all know what happens to fortan evidence in the post) to our Zoology consultant, the eminent cryptozoologist Dr Karl P.N Shuker...

The Migo Movie: A further muddying of murky waters

by Dr Karl P.N.Shuker

Quite a while ago, Japanese cryptozoologists received the opportunity to make up their own minds concerning the possible identity of the *migo*, when a Japanese TV documentary was screened that charted the now famous Japanese expedition of January/February 1994 in search of Lake Dakataua's mystifying water monster. So far, however, no portion of that documentary has been broadcast in the U.K. Thanks to the kindness of Jonathan Downes, who recently loaned me a videocassette of the programme sent to him by a Japanese correspondent, I thus became the first zoologist in Britain to view this elusive *migo* movie.

Inevitably, much of the documentary's dialogue was in Japanese, but the visuals were sufficiently self explanatory for this to be of little hindrance. After arriving in New Britain and reaching Lake Dakataua, the expedition's team interviewed local eyewitnesses, sailed upon the lake, and succeeded in filming the *migo*, sent divers into the lake and also into the nearby sea (it was suggested that the horseshoe shaped Dakataua may be connected to it by underwater channels), unsuccessfully attempted to lure the *migo* using dead chickens, lowered a cage into the lake and also some sound recording equipment, and exchanged views as to the *migo*'s identity with the expedition's scientific consultant, Prof. Roy Mackal, who recounted his views in English. (Regrettably, however, much of his account was lost to all but the most gifted of lip readers - due to the programme's misguided decision to employ a Japanese voice-over translation, instead of visual Japanese subtitles, for most of Roy's scenes).

Throughout the documentary, the identity promoted by the team was that of a mosasaur, a huge sea-dwelling lizard related to today's monitors, but which officially died out over 60 million years ago. Sadly, its candidature was not assisted by a woefully-inadequate model - impressive in close-up 'head and shoulder' shots, but with an impassively inflexible body that showed neither the inclination nor the ability to perform any natatory undulations. (Personally I thought that it looked like a clockwork newt! Ed)

Excluding some footage that showed little more than a blurred hump, the *migo* movie comprised two separate sections. The longer section, lasting for approximately five minutes and shot at a distance of approximately 0.7 miles, portrayed what Roy referred to in the film as three different body portions of a very large, long animal, travelling through the water. The most anterior portion was an indistinct head, staying out of the water throughout the footage. Behind this was a smaller portion that could have been a neck. Somewhat further back, but maintaining a constant distance from the 'neck', was a third body portion, taking the form of a large, flattened hump. This hump seemed to be actively propelling along the 'head', 'neck', and whatever body portion (perpetually hidden beneath the water surface) linked the hump to the 'neck' - every few minutes the hump submerged, then swiftly bobbed back up again. This section of footage also included some close-up shots - intriguingly, these gave the impression that the dorsal surface of the large, flattened hump was serrated, but this may well have been an optical illusion.

Shown earlier in the documentary was a much shorter piece of footage, lasting just a few seconds, but which to my mind was much more impressive. When I forwarded it frame by frame, it revealed what appeared to be a section of the *migo*'s body rapidly emerging from the water in a vertical upsurge, and bearing two slender projections resembling dorsal fins or spines, before submerging again - followed immediately by the momentary vertical emergence of what may have been a tail, with two horizontal, whale-like flukes. Regardless of the precise identity of the body portions in view, however, it was abundantly evident that the object being filmed here was not only animated, but also animate - alive.

Nevertheless, in my opinion, the *migo* is not a mosasaur, nor indeed anything of reptilian nature. The cardinal cryptozoological rule in classifying water monsters focuses upon the direction of body flexion (undulation) - horizontal or vertical. Reptiles, amphibians and fishes flex horizontally - only birds and mammals flex vertically. (There is one notable exception to this rule - judging from the shape of their vertebrae as preserved in fossil form, the long-extinct sea crocodiles or thalattosuchians could probably have undulated vertically, but for reasons elucidated a little later, a thalattosuchian identity is not among the front runners for the *migo*.) Their anatomy suggests that mosasaurs swam via horizontal, snake-like flexions of their long body and their laterally-flattened, vertically-finned tail - movements very different from those of the vertically undulating *migo*.

Following his return to the U.S.A. after the end of the expedition, Prof. Mackal corresponded with me regarding his own views as to the identity of the *migo* - which he terms the *migaua*. He has also very

generously provided me with much background information concerning it for inclusion within my forthcoming book, 'In search of Prehistoric Survivors' (due for publication later this year and surveying a wide range of mystery beasts that may be undiscovered modern-day descendants of 'officially' long extinct animals).

According to Roy, the *migo*, or *migaua* was over 33ft long and travelling at a speed of 4 knots. On film, he ruled out the possibility that it was a crocodile or any known type of fish and within his letters to me he opined that it was an evolved archaeocete, i.e. an archaeocete that has continued to evolve beyond the form acquired by the most recent species known from the fossil record. Archaeocetes were primitive cetaceans (whales) that officially died out around 25 million years ago, and included the overtly serpentine zeuglodonts, such as the famous 70 ft long *Basilosaurus*. Their skeletal anatomy indicates that zeuglodonts propelled themselves through the water via a series of sinuous vertical undulations. They may have sported one or more dorsal fins, and a small pair of horizontal flukes on their tail. Evolved zeuglodonts constitute the most popular, and likely, identity for many serpentine water monsters currently on file, including *Ogopogo* of Canada's Lake Okanagan, the monster of Lake Flathead in Montana, and British Columbia's 'Cadborosaurus' sea serpent.

Judging from their dentition, zeuglodonts were carnivorous - but this raises a problem, at least on first sight, when attempting to reconcile the *migo* with this identity. The TV programme included an interview with an English-speaking Papuan official - who commented that during a detailed investigation of Lake Dakataua in 1974, a visiting wildlife researcher discovered that it contains no fish of any type. This remarkable fact was also mentioned in Roy's letters to me - so if the *migo* is a zeuglodont, what is it feeding upon? As Roy disclosed, the answer is quite simple - namely the vast abundance of waterfowl that settles upon the lake's surface. The necessity to remain near the surface in order to seize these birds presumably explains why the *migo* is seen more often (and filmed more easily!) than comparable lake monsters elsewhere around the world - which undoubtedly feed predominantly upon fishes rather than waterfowl, and therefore do not need to frequent the upper levels of their watery domains so regularly.

Like Roy, I consider it feasible that the *migo* is indeed a modern-day archaeocete - and from the film evidence alone, a zeuglodont is a likely candidate. As readers of earlier 'Animals & Men' installments regarding the *migo* will have realised by now, however, it is precisely when everything seems to have become relatively straightforward with this animal that events become increasingly complicated again. When he sent me the videocassette, Jonathan Downes also enclosed some information sent to him by his Japanese correspondent, Tokuharu Takabayashi, which he permitted me to draw upon here.

Mr Takabayashi notes that in October 1978, Lake Dakataua was visited by Japanese cryptozoologist Toshikazu Saitoh, who learnt from natives inhabiting the nearby village of Blumuri that the lake monster was known as *massali*, *masalai*, and *mussali* (all translating as 'spirits'), and was first seen during the summer of 1971, by five different eyewitnesses. According to their accounts, the creature has a total length of about 30 ft, a relatively small head with long pointed jaws resembling a crocodile's and containing many sharp teeth, a long neck, a burly but streamlined body, a slender crocodilian tail, and two pairs of flippers (of which the front pair is noticeably larger than the hind) that resemble those of a marine turtle.

Interestingly, the overall image conjured up by this description recalls that of the 1994 team's favourite *migo* identity, the mosasaur - until, that is, one final feature attributed to the beast by its eyewitness is added to the picture. For according to them, the monster of Lake Dakataua is covered with short black hair. Mosasaurs were true lizards, and, like them, were covered not in hair but in scales - as attested by several well-preserved fossil specimens. Even allowing for the effects of continued evolution spanning the 60 odd million years between the most recent fossil species and the present day, it is not likely that a 20th Century mosasaur would have evolved a hairy pelage. The same also applies in relation to the prospect of a modern-day thalattosuchian as the identity

of this mystery beast - though the pen portrait of the *massali* offers little encouragement for this solution anyway.

There is, however, one type of creature that fits the description of the *massali* and for which the possession of hair would not pose a problem. Archaeocetes include the earliest of all cetaceans - and as cetaceans descended from quadrupedal land mammals, the first of these archaeocetes must have had four well-developed limbs. Until recently, no fossils of these 'missing links' had been found, but in 1994 one such species was finally documented.

Unearthed from river deposits in Pakistan's Kuldana Formation that are roughly 52 million years old, the fossilised remains belonged to a long-snouted species of very early cetacean approximately 9ft long, with a streamlined body, lengthy tail that probably lacked flukes, and two well-developed pairs of limbs. Moreover, the structure of its vertebral column implied that this was very flexible dorsoventrally - i.e. it could undulate vertically.

This radically new species was formally dubbed *Ambulocetus natans* - 'swimming walking whale' - because there is good reason to suppose that it was able to swim effectively in the sea, but also to move around on land rather like modern-day sealions. It is likely that as cetacean evolution progressed, the hind limbs of *Ambulocetus*'s descendants became ever smaller (for today's cetaceans possess only the merest vestige of hind limbs), and there would have been a stage during this evolution when cetaceans remarkably similar to native descriptions of the *massali* existed. So is this the identity of the *massali/migo* - not an evolved zeuglodont, but a morphologically-conservative, pre-zeuglodont archaeocete?

Even the monster's name, let alone its identity, is no longer as straightforward as once thought. After all, the usage of *massali* and similar names in preference to *migo* could be dismissed as nothing more dramatic than differences in local dialect - were it not for the comments of another visitor to Lake Dakataua. Japanese explorer-writer Atsuo Tanaka, who stayed at Blumuri in September 1983. Confirming to Mr Takabayashi that the local names for the Dakataua water monster were *massali* and *ru*, he stated that *migo* was actually the native name for a three foot long species of monitor lizard! Moreover, according to Tanaka, many of the villagers do not believe that anyone has seen a monster here or that it even exists.

Tanaka's own opinion is that any sightings that may have been made here are of a crocodile (perhaps an unknown species, but more probably either the New Guinea crocodile *Crocodylus novaeguineae* or the larger saltwater crocodile *C. porosus*), or a dugong.

So where does that leave the *migo*, *nigaua*, *massali*, *ru* - or whatever else we may wish to call it? According to Roy, the region's provisional government is very keen for further expeditions to take place, and for the capture of a living specimen. Judging from the extraordinary extent of contradictory evidence presently on file, it seems likely that this is the only hope for ever uncovering the truth concerning the enigmatic denizen of Dakataua.

EDITORS NOTE

So here the story rests....for the time being. We shall bring you more information as and when we get it.

THE CASE OF THE HAIRY HANDS

by Stephen Shipp

The tale of the Hairy Hands is perhaps one of Dartmoor's most famous mysteries. It could well have been worthy of Sir Arthur Conan-Doyle, with his famous fictional detective Sherlock Holmes investigating this strange occurrence. However, this is not fiction, and many people have suffered as a result of their appearance.

In the autumn of 1921 it produced the headline in The Daily Mail, 'Hairy Hands on Dartmoor'. Reports of this strange apparition have been around for centuries with horse drawn travellers fearing their presence, pony traps being turned over, cyclists having their handle bars wrenched from their hands, horses shying, cars and coaches crashing and so on. These events have all taken place along or close to an ordinary stretch of the B. 3212 road just outside of Postbridge and toward Two Bridges. They have sometimes resulted in fatalities as you will read.



These hands, though not exactly an animal, are included in this magazine as they might once have belonged to some unusual hairy creature. It has been speculated that wild bears once roamed Dartmoor-so could they be something to do with it? Or perhaps they are the apparition hands of a prehistoric person haunting the spot? This kind of spectre is fairly unusual-as although there are cases of ghost hands they are always reported to be without hair.

The accounts for this century begin in June 1921 when a Medical Officer for Dartmoor Prison was riding his motorcycle along the B.3212 from Two Bridges to Postbridge. With him were two small children in his side car. As he drove down the hill to where a small bridge crosses the East Dart river (SX 647 789), he called to the children to quickly jump clear. This they somehow did and landed unharmed on the grass verge whilst the motorcycle swerved off the road and crashed killing the doctor instantly.

This crash may have been accepted as being an ordinary road accident except for what happened to another motorcyclist on August 26th of that year. A young army officer left the house of a friend to visit some other people a considerable distance away. His route took him along the same stretch of road where the crash, described had occurred. An hour later he returned to his friend's house in a dazed condition with his motorcycle badly damaged. When he was eventually calmed down he said that as he went down the hill towards the bridge, he felt a pair of rough, hairy hands close over his own on the handle bars forcing the motorcycle to veer off the road very near to the spot that the doctor had been killed. He remembered nothing else until he regained consciousness.

Three years later, in 1924, a woman witnessed a hairy hand at a place about one mile west of the spot where

the two accidents had happened. She and her husband were asleep one moonlit night in a caravan near the ruins of the Powder Mills (Sx 628 767). Suddenly she was awoken with the strange feeling that something horrible was close at hand. As the woman looked up to the little window at the end of the caravan, she saw a strange shape on the other side of the glass. Moving closer, her heart beating fast the shape became clear- it was the fingers and palm of a very large hand with hairs on the joints and back of it. This phantom hand was clawings way up the window which was open a little at the top. Despite her fear, she was able to make the sign of the cross and pray very hard. The hand then slowly sank down out of sight and the feeling of terror passed.

One account, undated, talks of a young man driving his car from Plymouth to Chagford one evening. He never arrived there, and his overturned car and dead body were found close to the location of the previous crashes. No satisfactory reason for the accident could be determined.

More recently, a doctors car suddenly stopped with no apparent mechanical failure at the same point where the motorcycle accidents in 1921 occurred, and in 1979 at this spot yet another doctor ended up with his vehicle in the roadside ditch after an unknown powerful force seemed to take control.

To end on a personal note, the author and his then future wife Frances, were driving along the B.3212 from Moretonhampstead to Two Bridges. They had just gone over the bridge at Postbridge and were climbing the road hill when the car suddenly pulled to the left and bounced off the grass verge and back onto the road again. Frances, who was behind the wheel and is a safe driver couldn't explain why it had happened. It was only months later, when reading about the Dartmoor legend did we realise that this was the stretch of road haunted by the hairy hands and only yards away from where all the previous crashes were reported!

The map references given are for Ordnance Survey Landranger 191 (1:50,000)

REFERENCES

- BARBER S. & C. Dark and Dastardly on Dartmoor (Obelisk Publications 1988)
- BORD J. & C. Alien Animals (Paul Elek Ltd 1980)
- BROWN T. Devon Ghosts (Jarrold 1982).
- COXHEAD J.R.W. Legends of Devon (Western Press 1954).
- PEGG J. A visitors guide to Dartmoor (John Pegg Publishing 1983)
- PEGG J. After Dark on Dartmoor (John Pegg Publishing 1984)
- ST. LEGER-GORDON R. The Witchcraft and Folklore of Dartmoor (Robert Hale 1965)



The B3212 looking towards Postbridge

'Near Lizard but not near enough' ; An Addendum

By Stuart Leadbetter

(In Issue two we printed the original article, which Stuart wrote on the subject of his particular theories about the Loch Ness phenomena. This provoked an enormous response in our letters page both for and against his theories. Here, Stuart answers his critics....)

In the letters submitted by Nick Morgan and Martien Mannetje in Issue 3 Mr Morgan considers my statement that whatever lives in Loch Ness "has a body form easily mistaken for a Plesiosaur" to be incorrect, and to a certain degree and after much deliberation I agree. I have now come to realise that there does not exist a creature which possesses an exact match with the body form of a plesiosaur, but I believe that there does exist one which has a partial similarity, and this is mentioned by Mr Morgan in his letter : The Sturgeon.

This theory was first formulated right at the beginning of the whole Loch Ness saga by Rupert T. Gould in his book *'The Loch Ness Monster and others'* (1934). On pages 136 and 137 Gould suggests that a partially submerged sturgeon showing only the bony plates on its back, would appear as a multi humped sea serpent with a long neck and small head. (There is a drawing on page 136 to demonstrate this).

Although I agree with Gould's basic premise there are parts of it that I disagree with. In the drawing on page 136, the snout of the sturgeon does appear to be substantially longer than the snout of any sturgeon I have ever seen, and I don't think that the bony plates on the back would look like anything other than bony plates, but these observations have not diminished my belief in the 'Sturgeon-as-Nessie' theory because I have come across some information which could explain the 'Uprturned Boat', aspect of the Loch Ness sightings and I think that individual variability or even the possibility of a sub-species of sturgeon could explain some of the reports of head and neck sightings. Let me explain further.

In their book, *'Freshwater Fishes'*, P.S. Maitland and R.N. Campbell on page 90 state that the series of bony plates covering the sides and backs of sturgeons become smoother and sometimes disappear altogether as a fish grows older. Not only is this conducive to giving the appearance like that of an 'Uprturned Boat', but older sturgeons are usually larger sturgeons, and if they really do exist in Loch Ness, an area untouched by intensive fishing and fairly free from pollution, then there are likely to be some sizeable specimens present. I am quite comfortable for this explanation for the appearance of large humps on Loch Ness because sturgeon of twenty feet or more were common in the Danube and the Volga during the 19th Century, but as they were over fished the size plummeted.

I am not comfortable though with the hypothesis I have developed explaining the sightings of apparently serpentine heads and necks on Loch Ness.

To make the snout of a sturgeon into a believable explanation for the sightings of head and necks on Loch Ness, it would either have to be longer than is the norm, due to individual variability in body form and size present within any species population, or either be the adaptation of a previously undescribed sub-species of sturgeon. Both conditions are known to exist in other species but I have to admit that the possibility of a new sub-species of sturgeon, separate from the other known sub-species of sturgeon is pure speculation. (There is a way that fellow members could help me make this hypothesis a little more solid if at all. Apart from searching

for evidence and photographic records on captured sturgeons myself, if anyone reading this article has any information regarding records from which snout lengths of captured sturgeons can be gleaned please send it to the journal for publication).

Moving on to Mr Mannetje's letter. He questions my statement that 'In all the thousands of sightings not one describes Nessie plucking a bird from air in mid flight'. I still stand by this statement and may I take this opportunity to point out a glaring error that has been committed by the editor of this journal and which was seemingly attributed to me. This is the use of the word 'thousands'.

(SEE APOLOGY IN ISSUE FOUR P 26. Ed)

In my original manuscript I wrote that I considered myself to be familiar with the vast majority of the Loch Ness sightings and I am well aware that the total number falls well short of being in the 'thousands'. In my opinion the people who are responsible for the spreading of this patently false piece of information are Nick Witchell and Roy P. Mackal.

Talking of sightings, it makes me wonder why Mr Mannetje bothers assembling his collection of Loch Ness reports. What does he hope to achieve by doing so? In previous years I had the idea of compiling my own computer database of Loch Ness sightings but I scrapped the idea after some serious thought- what's the point of compiling all that information if you're not even sure that the stories from which it comes from are based on fact? How could you check the reports from many years earlier for accuracy when you had no witness address to go on? and even if you did have the witnesses address the person in question would probably be long since dead. In my view if Mr Mannetje uses his collection of Loch Ness reports for research purposes he should only do so with the clear knowledge that the data being processed may be highly flawed and unverifiable.

(EDITORIAL NOTE: If I have learned nothing else from my time as both a journalist and a cryptozoologist, I can tell a story which will not lie down when I see one. This one will run and run. Its now over to you...Comments please!)

Readers in the Westcountry may be interested to know that The Editor, (under the aegis of the Devon County Council Adult Education Department) will be giving a series of summer school lectures on the subject of Cryptozoology. Titled "Still on the Track of Unknown Animals" these lectures, at St Luke's High School, Exeter will feature video clips of our ongoing researches and are aimed at the novice and the expert alike. The dates currently confirmed are:

Saturday May 27th
Saturday June 17th
Saturday 22nd July
Saturday 26th August

For more details telephone 01392 424811

NERVOUS TWITCH

The Nervous Twitcher takes her regular look at all that's most weird in the world of our feathered friends...who WAS that masked ornithologist?

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Several tales of stolen and smuggled birds have filtered through in the last few months. A man was caught at an unnamed airport recently trying to smuggle 10 fighting cocks and two brood hens. Some of the birds woke up from a drugged sleep and started to crow loudly, giving the game away. The chickens had been hidden inside a large shipping carton by Florante Pascua, a Philippino-American from Guam. *ITV TELETEXT 18.3.89*

Two very rare yellow shouldered Amazon Parrots recently reared a brood of four youngsters. The two birds, Ken and Barbie, had been separately kidnapped from their native Venezuela and smuggled out. Barbie was picked up at Heathrow customs and Ken was found in Amsterdam. The happy couple have now set up home at Paradise Park, Hayle in Cornwall, where they will play an important part in a breeding programme designed to help the species survive. *DAILY MAIL Jan 12.95*

A blue fronted Amazon was stolen with personal possessions from a house in Hale, Cheshire. The owner Julie Rollings, sent out a desperate plea via a newspaper advertisement for his safe return but heard nothing for nine days. Then one day she had a strange 'phone call from a woman who told Julie to be at the car park of the George and Dragon pub in Altrincham at a certain time. 'Be there and you can have your parrot back' she said, 'but no questions asked'. Eventually a taxi turned up and the sole passenger was Silver, her lost parrot! It sounds like a plot from a bad B Movie but at least it had a happy ending! *Daily Mail 23.2.95*

SOCK IT TO ME MAMA

A ten day old vulture called 'Bert' is currently being reared by....an old sock! He was abandoned at an early age and zoo keepers at Whipsnade are using the makeshift puppet to help feed Bert and to make him think that it is another vulture. *BBC TELETEXT NEWSROUND 23.2.95*

WHITHER SHALL YE WANDER?

I can't think of many worse things than slicing off your own finger with a chisel, but one of them must be when the finger you've just sliced off gets eaten by your pet geese! That's exactly what happened to handyman David Bidmead from Crawley when he was doing a spot of DIY. *Northampton Chronicle 22.3.95.*

DON'T BE SILLY

Is this an urban myth, a practical joke or real life? *The Daily Mail* reported in 1993 that hundreds of tiny woolly jumpers had been knitted by volunteers to help save oiled seabirds. People, it is claimed, believed that the jumpers would help soak up the oil and keep them warm. Apparently the RSPCA were inundated with them. If this story had appeared on the first of April I could understand but it appeared on the 20th February. Any thoughts?

LETTERS

Opinions expressed are those of the individual writer and not necessarily those of this Magazine.

As has been the case since the editor's father first mooted the idea of a letters page last summer the crypto post bag has been overflowing with your missives on all subjects. Crypto not to mention Zoological.

EASY AS A B C?

Dear Sir,

Regarding cats: Zoologist Dr. Ingvald Lieberkind in his Danish Encyclopaedia 'Dyrenes Verden' from the mid sixties lists the following big cat crossbreeds:

Lion/Tiger

Lion/Leopard

Lion/Jaguar

and between the domestic cat and:

Felis chaus

F. silvestris

F.s.ocreata

F.s.ornata

F.s.cafra

F.lynx

The latter fits some descriptions of Alien Big Cats (ABC's). Other than that he also listed a cross between Puma and Leopard (two different genera).

It seems that cats are in general so close genetically that 'anything goes', and this fact could for the moment be a necessity in a thinly spread population. Some of this offspring should be considered sterile though, but we just might be so lucky as to watch a 'species' in the making; nature working from scratch. A topic for future investigation would be an independent library of hair types for reference purposes. A zoo would probably be helpful. The library should contain pictures of hair types, including individual variation, protein profile and possibly DNA profile. Considering the interest from the police in this matter they will help.

By the way: We should not expect to keep the big cats forever. The moment the ABC's (or should we say the BBC's) get their official confirmation we could lose them. England can live with in the region of 5,000 people killed in traffic per year and (multiplied from Denmark) more than 100,000 dog bites, but man is an irrational animal. The moment a threat is perceived from ABC's, real or imagined, the devil is loose. This problem has to be dealt with along the way. My feelings are therefore mixed with worry, but that must be the eternal problem of cryptozoology. Personally, regarding ABC's, the British fauna needs a medium sized or big predator, whether cat or wolf. Some purists may argue but the present state of the ecosystem with nothing bigger than a fox or a badger is un-natural.

Eric Sorensen

Denmark

LOCH'ED IN COMBAT?

Dear Mr Downes.

The letter from G.M.Stocker (*A&M* p 22), concerning pre 1930's sightings of the Loch Ness Monster sent me hunting through my bookshelves, to try and find further details. I would like to comment here on Mr Stocker's statement that *"when General Wade's men were building the road south of the loch his men mentioned seeing 'whales' in the loch"*...

I found the following account in *'The Loch Ness Story'* by Nicholas Witchell (*Penguin Books* 1975). Witchell states that in 1769, a 'correspondent in New Zealand' (unnamed) claimed to have come across a book published in 1769, which told of "two leviathan creatures" being sighted by the road builders. *"It was thought that these might have been one of the whale variety or some huge, unknown sea species which had made their way through some subterranean passage and grown too large to return."*

Witchell then goes on to say that attempts to trace this supposed book had been unsuccessful, so unless someone has found the hoary tome in the twenty years since Witchell wrote the story of the early 'whale' sightings must be taken cum grano salis. Can any reader of *'Animals & Men'* shed any light on this matter?

Turning now to your article *'Crocodile Tears'* (p.17), this has proved very useful in untangling the Migo/Migau/Unknown Crocodile mess in New Britain. It is now clear, thanks to your reprinting of the original sources, that we are looking at two quite separate cryptids on that island, which until now have been conflated.

Firstly we have the account by W.T.Neill of animals that were quite clearly crocodiles, spotted around 'upland lakes'. These reptiles probably constitute a new sub-species or even a new species of the Crocodylidae. The animal reported specifically from Lake Dakataua, on the Williaumez Peninsula, and called 'Migo', is a very different kettle of fish.

Migo is said to have a 'head and a neck as long and slim as a horse' with 'hair on the back of its long neck' and a round back (i.e. its back appears as a single hump, rather than several vertical undulations). This description matches very well the type of 'sea serpent' named 'The Merhorse' in Heuvelmans' classic *"In the wake of the Sea Serpents"*. Certainly one would hardly expect to find hair on the nape of a crocodile - or a mosasaur for that matter - so if Migo is real, it must be a mammal. Perhaps New Britain will be the next Vu Quang, with several unknown species awaiting the intrepid zoologist?

Keep up the good work,
Yours sincerely,

Mike Grayson.
London.

EDITORS NOTE: I think that it is more than possible that there are at least three new species of animal to be discovered on the island of New Britain. A new species of crocodile, an aberrant monitor lizard, and most importantly a surviving pre Zeuglodont Archaeocete. I am just wondering how long it will be before anyone else picks up on the similarity between the 'Rui' mentioned in Dr Shuker's article in this issue and the 'Row'

described by 'Cannibal' Miller from nearby New Guinea and included in Heuvelmans' 'On the Track of Unknown Animals'.

LOCH'ED IN ONCE AGAIN

Dear Sir,

Without wanting to earn myself a reputation as a blinkered sceptic on the issue of the Loch Ness Monster G.M.Stocker's letter (A&M4) does require further comment.

Turning first to the historical records. If General Wade's men had sighted 'whales' in the loch this would have given very strong support to the theory of the 'monster'. Unfortunately there is no evidence that there were any such reports. This reference is supposed to have come from a book published in 1769 but as far as I am away this publication has never been located.

The 'floating island' is more interesting and comes from Richard Franck's book 'Northern Memoirs'. Of the supposed earlier evidence of this creature this reference does at least have the merit of actually existing. Franck, incidentally thought that the phenomenon was caused by mats of floating vegetation (whilst other writers have identified it with the *crannog* of Cherry Island at the south-western corner of the loch). It is interesting too that the most famous example of a 'floating island' was actually in Loch Lomond which has not sustained any tradition of 'monster' sightings.

The third example given by G.M.S.; the diver being frightened by a creature ... "like a huge frog" is another example of a supposed earlier sighting that was not made public until after the 1933 flap.

Turning to the legendary examples given in the letter. The whole subject of folklore traditions is highly complex and whilst it is interesting that St. Columba (not St Augusta) performed his miracle with a monster at, or near, Loch Ness this legend should be seen in the context of stories designed to show the power of the Christian faith and shouldn't be taken simplistically as *prima facie* evidence of a physical creature.

Similarly the Kelpie tradition is so widespread, including waters that could never have sustained a 'monster', that its link with the Loch Ness creature is at best tenuous. There are other equally convincing explanations for the creation of this legend including, as illustrated in G.M.S.'s letter, their use to frighten children away from swimming in what are potentially deadly waters.

Yours faithfully,

Nick Morgan,
North Yorkshire.

Midnight Books

SPECIALISTS IN SECONDHAND BOOKS ON THE UNEXPLAINED

To receive our latest book catalogue, simply send four first class stamps (or if overseas, two International Reply Coupons) to:

Midnight Books
Frances and Steven Shipp
The Mount, Ascerton Road
Sidmouth, Devon, EX10 9BT

HELP

This is the section of the magazine where you, the reader can help us (and vice versa) with ongoing research projects.

FUNKY FROGS

In Issue One we printed an article about the multi coloured frogs which have recently been appearing across the south of Britain and in Issue four we printed an update with an appeal for information about sightings. 'Animals & Men' reader **Andy Stephens**, of Bristol wrote in...

"When I was a child I used to go and stay with my Aunt and Uncle who lived in Uplowman near Tiverton in Devon with my brother. During these stays we would fish in the canal near Halberton for tench and perch. Often for the tench we would throw in a rake head on a piece of string into the canal to clear weed. During the 1960's I was doing this one hot day. As I emptied the weed onto the bank I was startled to see a creamy white frog jumping out of the pile.

I was extraordinarily keen on reptiles and amphibians in those days and it was undoubtedly a white or cream coloured version of the common frog. I could not say what colour its eyes were. I realised this was something unusual and I tried to catch it. I was pretty fast and I got both hands round it. As I raised my hands it slipped out and leapt into the water never to be seen again. I do recall that my brother who is three years older than me thought that I was making it up, (he was fishing further up the bank). That's older brothers for you!

That place on the canal is a magical place for me, right where a bridge crosses it. A few years ago when on a business trip (once again on a very hot day), I took a detour on the way home just to go there. It was as quiet as the grave except for the buzzing of flies. Then a shrill ripped through the air and I immediately recognised the sound of a raptor or bird of prey. Slinking through the fields nearby I entered a field of nearly mown cereal and there amongst the stubble were two magnificent buzzards who were soon joined by a third. I watched them for fifteen minutes or so and I felt like I had never grown up. I love that place!"

PINBALL LIZARDS

In issue one we printed a letter from reader **Suzanne Stebbings** who had a query about some unusual lizards in her collection that she appeared to have bred 'by mistake'. She writes with an update:

"You may remember the mysterious lizards that hatched from *Lacerta viridis* eggs. The babies looked like *G. galotea*. They both eventually died. The latter from a black leg disease, that infected a number of lizards. The baby did grow to resemble a brown version of *L. tuluicata*".

These mysterious baby lizards are a real puzzle. **SOMEONE** out there must have some ideas as to what and why they were?

We are still looking for the following pieces of information to help us in our research:

- * 'Big Bird' sightings post 1977.
- * More oddly coloured frogs. Photos and specimens of same.
- * Comic Books and pub signs with a Cryptozoological theme.
- * Live specimens of soft shelled turtles and larger aquatic salamanders (mudpuppies, sirens, amphiumas etc) or correspondence with people who have kept them.
- * Books, magazines etc on Hong Kong and its wildlife.

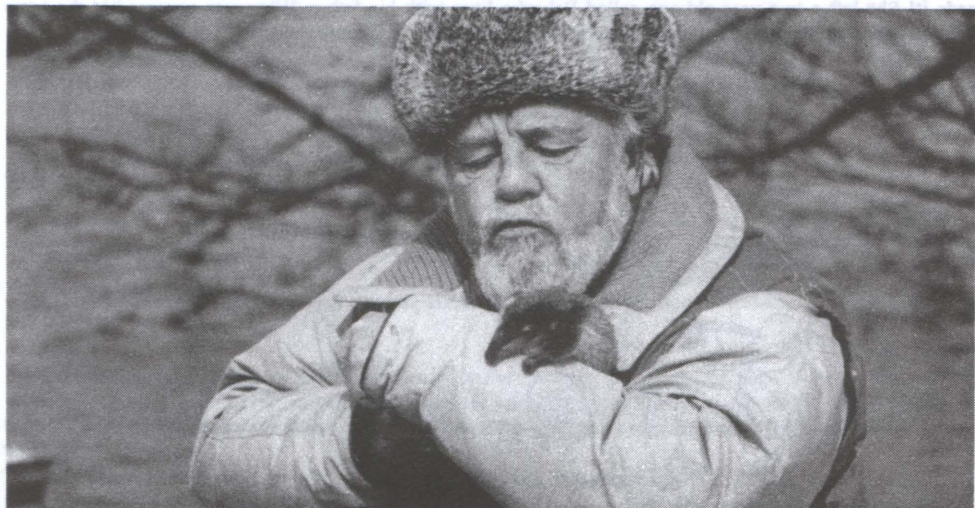
OBITUARIES

"There is a farm called misery
but of that we'll have none"

GERALD DURRELL (1925-1995)

In my life I have been unlucky enough to meet most of my personal heroes. I have ended up working for two of them but in every case they did not live up to my expectations. I never, however met my first, and greatest hero, Gerry Durrell who died of complications following a liver transplant operation on the 30th January this year. I have known of his serious illness for the last year because ever since we started I have been sending each issue of *Animals and Men* to him at Jersey Zoo, and I have been exchanging letters with his assistant John Hartley who said repeatedly kind things about us but said that 'Gerry was too ill' to read the magazine. This has been my greatest personal disappointment since we started because if it hadn't been for Gerald Durrell I wouldn't be who I am today.

My mother read me extracts from his books when I was a small child and as soon as I was old enough to read them for myself I devoured them avidly. His most popular book 'My Family and other Animals' (1956), provided me at an early age with my two most enduring role models, Gerry himself, and his almost sociopathically eccentric elder brother Larry. For many years I was determined to be either an investigative (if slightly anthropomorphic) analytical field zoologist (and burgeoning zookeeper), or an eccentric and irascible writer surrounded by an ever changing bevy of ridiculously highbrow friends.



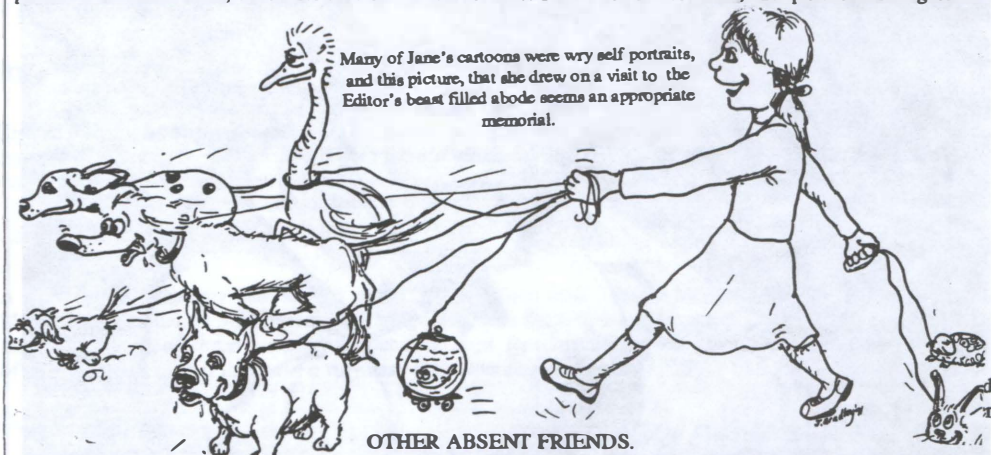
Gerald Durrell. Picture Copyright Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust

Gerald Durrell made a number of highly acclaimed TV series, including most recently *The Amateur Naturalist* and *Durrell in Russia*, but for me it was the sheer good natured amateurishness of his earlier B&W TV appearances in the 1960's which encapsulated the character that we had all come to know and love from his books. In the field of Cryptozoology he wrote the forwards to perhaps the most important two books on the subject, to have been published in the UK; *'On the Track of Unknown Animals'* by Bernard Heuvelmans (1956) and *'The Lost Ark'* by Karl Shuker (1993). For many years he had been inferring that he would write something on the subject himself and all of his many fans within the wider sphere of Fortean are disappointed that now this will never happen.

I haven't even attempted to detail his work as founder of Jersey Zoo, his work as a conservationist and within the field of Animal Behaviour or his work as founder of the mini university attached to the zoo which now trains people from all over the world to work within their own countries conserving their own natural heritage. Many people have written all that over the past three months. I would just like to say that the world will be a poorer and a less exciting place without him.

JANE BRADLEY 1961-95

The first four issues of this magazine were defined by the cartoons and graphic design of Jane Bradley. She was also our Scottish correspondent and had been responsible for gathering some of the silliest and most eccentric news stories to grace our pages. She also thought out the silliest and most cerebral campaign slogan of all time with 'SOLIPSISTS UNITE'. She was killed whilst hitch-hiking on the M5 on the 5th February this year. She was an extremely talented artist, and surreal humourist but as is the case the spark which produced this 'wild' talent also caused her to suffer from severe depression, psychological and behavioural problems. She had been undergoing treatment for these illnesses and had been making considerable progress, when the news of the suicide of a close friend in Edinburgh threw her already unstable emotions into a turmoil and she left the residential centre where she had been living and itched towards Scotland. Unfortunately, she never made it! She left a two year old son called Bal who lives with his father. Whenever anyone dies the same platitudes are trotted out, but in her case one at least is true. There will never be anyone quite like her again.



Many of Jane's cartoons were wry self portraits, and this picture, that she drew on a visit to the Editor's beast filled abode seems an appropriate memorial.

OTHER ABSENT FRIENDS.

In the first three months of this year we have also lost popular animal author and vet James Herriot, Satirist and actor Peter Cook, and the irreplaceable Viv Stanshall. We wouldn't be who we are if we did not remember them in these pages:

....."because we know of one, that's really much more fun".

BOOK REVIEWS

FOLKLORE AND MYSTERIES OF THE COTSWOLDS by Mark Turner (Robert Hale pb 191pp 6.99)

This excellent little book does just about what the title implies but unlike so many others of its genre it does it well. Most of the material is broadly fortaean in nature but it covers several 'black dog' sightings in considerable depth as well as a particularly interesting 'monster' episode in Aston Magna, Gloucestershire where a 'bear' like creature preyed on local pets during the early eighties. There are several other ghostly bear stories in the book and these taken together shed a possible new light on the recent sightings of a brown bear near Oxford (SEE A&M 2).

I would, however, have liked to see illustrations and proper maps as the one sketch map that is included is barely adequate for its task.

THE GOOD GHOST GUIDE by John Brooks (Jarrold 288pp 8.99).

This is a workmanlike gazetteer of over a thousand British Ghost sightings and haunted sites and as such contains a number of animal ghosts of interest to readers of this magazine. It contains yet another folk story to explain the ghostly monkey of Athelhampton Hall in Dorset, and a number of ghostly bears and black dogs and even a werewolf that is new to me.

There is a comprehensive index, a glossary and some excellent maps. However, suprisingly whereas it is doubtless an excellent reference book, unlike my own favourite in this field (Andrew Green's *"Our Haunted Kingdom"* from 1973), it fails to imbue the reader with any sense of excitement, interest or involvement which is a great pity.

STRANGE STORIES AMAZING FACTS (Readers Digest 608pp)

STRANGE WORLDS AMAZING PLACES (Readers Digest 432pp)

EXPLORING THE SECRETS OF NATURE (Readers Digest 432pp)

Unfortunately Readers Digest didn't actually send me the books I wanted to review, which were the two on which our own Dr Karl Shuker had acted as consultant. Each of these (especially 'Strange Stories Amazing Facts'), have something to recommend them to the amateur fortaean zoologist but the more serious student will probably have most of the source material already.

These are strange books. Probably the best way to describe them is as the literary equivalent of a Transatlantic Corporate fast food restaurant. Everything is stunningly presented in bite sized chunks which look and taste great but in the end do little to satiate your hunger. (Would it be churlish to also say that too much of either makes you slightly bilious? ...yes it probably would!)

Great pictures though!!!

PERIODICAL REVIEWS

We welcome an exchange of periodicals with magazines of mutual interest although because we now exchange with so many magazines we only include in our listings those magazines who have published an issue which we have received during the previous three months

BIGFOOT RECORD. Bill Green, c/o The Bigfoot Centre, 21 Benham St, Apartment F, Bristol, CT06010 USA This free news service for bigfoot buffs is bi-monthly and has a refreshingly informal style

DRAGON CHRONICLE, The dragon trust, PO Box 3369, London SW6 6JN. A fascinating collection of all things draconian which now appears four times a year

NEXUS 55 Queens Rd, E. Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 1BG. Intelligent look at the fringes of science. Well

NESSLETTER Rip Hepple, 7 Huntshieldford, St Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland Co Durham DL13 1RQ. This magazine has been appearing regularly for many years and cannot be recommended highly enough.

BIPEDIA, Francois de Sarre, CERBI, BP65, 06202, NICE, CEDEX 3, FRANCE. A magazine about Initial Bipedalism, scholarly and concise.

TEMS NEWS, 115 Hollybush Lane, Hampton, Middlesex, TW12 2QY. An engaging collection of quasi fortaen odds and ends from veteran UFO buff Lionel Beer.

TOUCHSTONE and **PEGASUS,** Jimmy Goddard, 25 Albert Rd, Addlestone, Surrey two neat UFO/Fortean mags. Well produced and collated.

DEAD OF NIGHT, 156 Bolton Road East, Newferry, Wirral, Merseyside, L62 4RY. An amusing and intelligently put together Fortean magazine. Issue four has an article on 'black dogs' and a long round up of absurd items of fortaen zoology. One of my favourite magazines.

CRYPTOZOOLOGIA, Association Belge d'Etude et de Protection des Animaux Rares, Square des Latins 49/4, 1050 Bruxelles. Belgium. A French language magazine published by the Belgian society for Cryptozoology.

ENIGMAS, 41 The Braes, Tullibody, Clackmannanshire, Scotland, FK10 2TT A Fine 'mysteries' magazine with a UFO bias.

PROMISES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS 42 Victoria Road, Mt Charles, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4Qd England. Kevin McClure is the editor of this excellent magazine on 'non human intelligence'

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA CRYPTOZOOLOGY CLUB NEWSLETTER, 3773 West 18th Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. V6S 1B3. Excellent and well put together, and they were very nice about us in their last issue.

FROM OUR FILES

I have a particular interest in the winged entities that have been reported occasionally worldwide over the past couple of hundred years. These are apparently completely different to the 'big bird' sightings which often occur in the same places. These sightings often come in chronological spates, (although not always in the same geographical area), and it has been many years since the last well attested outbreak of this, possibly the most bizarre of fortan quasi-zoological phenomena. The most well known of such creatures are 'Owlman' (Cornwall during the late 1970's) and 'Mothman' (USA during the mid 1960's), but these apparitions have occurred everywhere from Vietnam to Surrey.

The latest 'winged thing' was reported from Washington State in the Pacific Northwest of the USA in April 1994. The Pacific North-West is one of the more prolific window areas for fortan zoological phenomena, and is famed for its Bigfoot sightings and for the mysterious falls of poisonous jelly reported in A&M4. This latest outbreak started when 18 year old Brian Canfield was driving home to the isolated settlement of Canip One from the nearby town of Buckley at 9.30 in the evening. The engine of his pickup truck died and the dashboard lights fell dark and the vehicle stopped suddenly. His headlights were still functioning and they lit up the shape of a nine foot figure descending from the sky to the road in front of him. It had blue tinted fur, yellowish eyes, the feet of a bird, tufted ears and sharp straight teeth. Its wings were folded and attached to its back and broad shoulders.

"It was standing there staring at me like it was resting, like it didn't know what to think", said Brian, "I was scared, it raised the hair on me. I didn't feel threatened. I felt out of place".

The newspaper report goes on to describe Brian in terms which make him seem almost saintly by comparison to the usual media representation of young people from that part of America, and stressed that not only had he never had any paranormal experiences before but he didn't take drugs, or drink, play 'Dungeons and Dragons' or listen to heavy metal music. Although it doesn't sound like he would be much fun at a party his description of the apparition was clear and succinct: *"Its eyes were yellow and shaped like a piece of pie with pupils like a half moon. The mouth was pretty big. White teeth. No fangs. The teeth were like a wolf".*



"BATSQUATCH"

The general consensus of opinion both amongst his family and his friends and of the reporter from the TACOMA NEWS TRIBUNE who carried the story on the 24th April 1994. (Thanks COUdi), is that young Brian saw something but noone is prepared to say quite what. They have given the creature the stomach churningly twee name of 'Batsquatch', but noone, as far as I can make out have equated this latest apparition with the well attested 'winged things' of previous years. The last word, I think should go to Brian himself:

"I'm really not into this stuff. It boggles my mind really hard core. I really can't explain it. It's weird, definitely wierd. I don't like it. Usually this stuff happens to someone else".

We at Animals & Men await further developments in the skies above Washington and Oregon with great interest.

JANE BRADLEY

1961-95



OK, I'M AN UNKNOWN
ANIMAL SO I'LL
DO YOU A REAL
CHEAP ACOUSTIC
SET...

As Glastonbury Festival looms on the horizon—even the
cryptids are getting in on the act....

ISSN 13540637 TYPESET BY CHICKEN
POWER